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NEWTON ABBOT RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for 1941.

VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1941.



POPULATION (Mid Year): 26,500.

<u>LIVE BIRTHS</u>	M.	F.	TOTAL	
Legitimate	135	141	276)	
Illegitimate	8	8	16)	292 = Rate of 11 per 1000 people.

Average rate for last 10 years = 13.1.
England & Wales Birth Rate = 14.6.

STILL BIRTHS.

Legitimate	1	3)	4	= Rate of 11.9 per 1000 births (live and still)
Illegitimate	-	-)		

DEATHS. 185 185 370 = Rate of 13.9. per 1000 people

England & Wales Rate 12.9

MATERNAL MORTALITY (Child Birth)
1 = Rate of 2.9 per 1000 total births

INFANT MORTALITY
(under one year)

8	5	13	= Rate of 39.2 per 1000 live births.
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England & Wales rate = 59.

RAINFALL for year: 33.95 inches.
(Average for preceding 5 years = 42.69)



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NEWTON ABBOT RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT of the MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
for 1941.

This report - the third of the war period - is drawn up in accordance with a Circular from the Ministry of Health dated 24th March, 1942, which directs that it shall be on much the same lines as the two previous wartime reports and confined to essential matters affecting public health and in particular those arising out of the war.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE:

Infectious Notifiable Disease

Disease	Cases	Sent to Hos- pital	Deaths
Diphtheria	56	54	5
Scarlet Fever	25	19	0
Pneumonia	24	3	0
Erysipelas	7	0	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	2	2	0
Typhoid	1	1	0
Paratyphoid B.	1	1	0
Whooping Cough	76	0	2
Measles	385	0	0
Cerebro-Spinal Fever.	3	3	3

Diphtheria: 56 Cases. This unprecedented number for any one year was a continuance of the 45 cases which occurred during the Autumn and Winter of 1940. By the end of May the outbreak had almost ceased. The crowded state of many of the Schools and homes makes it practically impossible to exercise effective control over any infectious disease and in the case of Diphtheria it was not till the effect of immunisation began to make itself felt that there was any diminution in the numbers

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSION

ON THE

PROGRESS OF

RESEARCHES IN

Immunisation against Diphtheria:

The response to the offer of the Government to free immunisation was very satisfactory. As time was short and no help could be obtained the age limit was fixed at 12 years.

The first batch of children were done on 28th January, and continued at short intervals during the year, the last being on 15th October.

Of approximately 6,000 children in the District (Devonians and Evacuees) 3,850 or 64% completed the course. Of these 2,458 were Devon children.

Immunisation is still going on, principally among infants who reach the age of 12 months and those children between 12 and 14 years who were not done last year.

There can be little doubt that if immunisation were made compulsory for a few years the disease would be practically stamped out with the saving of much suffering to the children and great expense to the general public.

Tuberculosis. As was to be expected the evacuated population from up-country and Plymouth contained a certain number of previously notified cases of this disease. In most cases information concerning them was forwarded from where they came from and they were followed up and visited in the usual way.

As regards permanent residents 25 new cases (11 males and 14 females) were notified during the year and there were 18 deaths.

At the end of the year there were approximately 123 tuberculous persons (not counting evacuees) living in the district. This is an increase of 5 on the year before.

The Evacuees. Though still plentiful everywhere the mothers and children (owing to the almost complete cessation of air raids on London) have been returning home in an ever increasing stream.

On 1st January, 1941 there were about 2,600 children and 1,000 adults. On 31st December there were 1,300 and 510. Large numbers of the children were medically examined in school during the year, and generally speaking their health and nutritional condition was found to be excellent, greatly to the credit of the people who are housing and feeding them.

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Hostels. The two Hostels for unbilleteable evacuees one in Newton Abbot and the other at Bishopsteignton, which are run jointly by the two authorities have functioned smoothly and efficiently throughout the year. The average in the two houses is about 50.

The Sick Bay in Newton Abbot for contagious skin diseases also serves the two Districts and latterly has admitted a good many cases from Teignmouth and Dawlish. It has 30 beds.

Of a total of 229 in patients, 179 were cases of Scabies, 33 of Impetigo and other conditions 17.

Out-patients number 76 - Scabies 73, Impetigo 3. Scabies is a troublesome and difficult condition to deal with especially in crowded billets where cleanliness is not of much account, but exclusion from School and prompt treatment has kept this nuisance within reasonable limits. In this respect also the powers given by the Scabies Order, 1941 for the following up and examination of contacts has been very helpful.

Apart from the excess of infectious disease - the natural consequence of overcrowding, - the general health of the population in spite of war conditions and rationing of food has shown no perceptible deterioration. In the opinion of some it has improved, possibly as a result of higher wages, less unemployment and the enforced decrease in the consumption of butcher's meat, tea and sugar.

As regards other aspects of Public Health work, e.g. housing, water supplies, sewage disposal etc. there is little to report. It has been mainly a case of making the best of what we have and doing without until better times return.

It may be added that shortage of staff and the imposition of new duties consequent on the war such as inspection of soldiers billets and camps, provision, equipment and supervision of evacuee billets, rest centres, hostels, sick-bays etc. not to mention A.R.P. leaves but little opportunity for the pleasant and useful routine of peace-time. Let us hope it will not be very long before all such wearisome and unprofitable things are of the past, gone and as far as possible forgotten.

W.H. SCOTT.

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